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" Oh ! that such bulky bribes as all might see,
" Still, as of old, encumbered villainy !
" 'Tis paper credit, last and best supply;
" That lends corruption lighter wings to fly."

POPE, Ep. III.

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REFORM OF FINANCIAL ABUSES.

LETTER IV.

SIR,—Before I proceed to point out a method, by which the expenditure of the public money may be conducted, without being liable to the numberless opportunities of committing frauds that exist at present, and which frauds, when committed, are not under the form now in use of stating the public expenses, exposed to detection by Parliament, it is obviously necessary to make such a preparatory explanation of the proceedings now had in regard to the application of the public money, as will enable your readers to judge correctly, how far they are defective, and in what degree the reformation, which I am about to recommend, is calculated to correct abuses. From the fullest consideration that I am capable of giving to so extensive a subject, I am of opinion, that the discussion of it may be properly divided into four distinct parts. 1. The stating the accounts of the public expenses. 2. The incurring of them. 3. The examining of the demands for payment; and, 4. The paying of these demands. According to this division, I shall proceed to point out, as briefly as possible, what the practice and the errors are of the system now in use; and then I shall proceed to propose one more consistent in its regulations, and more consonant with the acknowledged principles of finance.—

1. In looking into the annual accounts of the public income and expenditure, we shall, in the onset, find full cause for advancing some very strong objections. For in the eight annual papers that professedly contain these accounts, one of them No. 5, that is, according to its title, a statement of the whole public expenditure, by no means answers this description; for, in No. 1, which is called an account of the public income, there are no less than eleven columns, expressing the expenditure of a very considerable portion of that income. Four of these are certainly carried forward to the expenditure paper, but the rest of them are wholly omitted; namely, "Repayments, Drawbacks, &c.; Irish Packet Establishment; Charges of Management; His Majesty's Forests; and Imports for the Redemption of the Land Tax. Again, the expenditure paper does not mere-

ly contain an account of sums of money actually expended, but it likewise embraces an account of some of the resources of the public income; for instance, the expenses for the establishments of the Secretaries of State's Offices; of the War Office; of the Treasury Office, and of other offices, charged in the civil list, are not the whole of the expenses incurred. The whole produce of the several fee funds in each office, are applied to defray these expenses, and the sum charged on this account in the civil list, are such sums as are wanting to make up with the fee funds the whole expense incurred by these establishments. Again, the sale of old stores, and the droights of the Admiralty, are applied in a similar manner towards the payment of expenses incurred in the different naval and military departments; though, like the fee funds actual resources of revenue, and in propriety ought so to be received and accounted for. Such, therefore, is the inconsistency, and such the confusion in accounting for the public money, that you must look into the income account for the public expenditure, and into the expenditure account for the public income! The charges of management, &c. contained in the income paper, are as much items of the nation's expenses, as the payments to the army and navy; and the fee funds are resources of its income, equally as to every principle and purpose of taxation as any specific tax. The fees are virtually taxes, and as such, now that salaries have been given in lieu of them, they ought to be accounted for, and not left, as they now are, to be received and applied by the clerks in the offices of the state. If the principle was adopted of paying ALL the revenue, of every description, and from whatever source it might be derived, into the Exchequer, this commixture and confusion of accounts could never occur. There then could be no such absurdity, as a statement of the national income crammed with columns of the expenditure of it; or such a thing as a statement of the expenditure diminished in its real amount by the entire suppression of productive sources of revenue. But what is of still greater consequence, there would not then present themselves so many opportunities of committing fraud.—There is this

further objection to the present method of stating the public expenditure, an objection of the greatest importance; viz. the want of sufficient detail in explaining the items in the abstract sheet, to enable Parliament to trace the application of the whole of the public money. Without the power of doing so, no system of accounting can be adequate to the proper object of it; the commission of speculation may pass undiscovered, as it has already, for years together, and no correct opinion can be formed of the capability of the nation to maintain its present or to incur new expenses. To establish, therefore, an efficient plan for understanding in what manner the public money is expended, the present one must be radically altered, and such a plan must be substituted in its place, as will be in strict conformity with the true principles of stating accounts, and will be competent to convey a correct and satisfactory history of every shilling, which the subject pays, from the period of its first payment by him, to that of its repayment for a public service.—2, 3, and 4. The discussion of the present practice of government in incurring, examining, and paying of the public expenses, involves matters of great variety and extent; and, from the circumstance of these duties being performed without any distinct arrangement, the discussion of each of them cannot well be separated. But, however complex this subject is, it is absolutely necessary that the principles, at least of this practice should be canvassed, in order that the errors of it may be sufficiently exposed to authorise the proposal of its entire abolition.—If we find upon investigating it, that no general principle is allowed to govern the regulations of office; that there is no consistency in the regulations, and no consistency in the control of public accountants, we shall be warranted in condemning such a practice; and by acquiring a knowledge of what is defective, we shall attain the surest means of being capable of advising improvement.—The following statement of the expenditure for 1803 *, will point out a ready arrangement for proceeding with the inquiry,

1. On National Debt	- - £24,264,424
2. On Exchequer Bills	- - 801,787
3 and 4. On Civil List and other charges on Consolidated Fund	- - - 1,346,043
5. On Civil Government of Scotland	- - - 79,502

* This year is taken, the accounts for 1804 not being yet delivered by the House of Commons.

6. Payments in anticipation of the Exchequer receipt	- - 441,485
7. The Navy	- - - 7,979,878
8. The Ordnance	- - - 1,827,049
9. The Army	- - - 11,299,416
10. Miscellaneous Services	- 2,800,500
11. From Income Paper, total payments out of Gross Revenue	- - - 5,294,473
12. † From Do. on account of Militia	- - - 96,266
Do. his Majesty's Forests	- 16,670
Do. for redemption of Land Tax	- - - 61,712
	<hr/> £ 56,312,199

In examining into the detail of this great expenditure, the first obvious distinction that presents itself is that between expenses which are fixed, and specifically ascertained and regulated in their amount by acts and votes of Parliament, and those which are not so ascertained. When the public money is made payable in particularly stated sums for express and defined objects, there evidently can exist but little difficulty in securing the public from fraud. Of this description of payments are those for the interest and redemption of the national debt, and a great proportion of the charges upon the consolidated fund. As the arrangements made with the Bank of England by the Treasury secure the immediate payment of the interest on the national debt, to the persons entitled to receive it; and as all payments of a similar fixed nature, might be paid by the Treasury in the same manner, directly to the persons entitled to payment, there does not appear to be wanting any further regulations in respect to the payment of expenses precisely voted and ordered by Parliament, than the general application of this principle of payment to all of them. It is, therefore, to those public expenses, that are not, and cannot be defined in specifically stated sums, that our attention may be said to be particularly wanting. To those expenses, that are voted by the House of Commons upon estimates, and are eventually incurred at the discretion of the public officers of the several departments. Of this description are the

† On comparing the charge in No. 5, for militia and deserters warrants, and with the same charge in No. 1, it will appear to be in the former 108,405l. and in the latter 204,671l., making a difference of 96,266l. How is such a shameful demonstration of great fraud or great inaccuracy to be explained away?



expenses of the navy, the ordnance, the army, and miscellaneous services; and, likewise, though not voted on estimates, the payments in anticipation of the Exchequer receipt, and the total payments in No. 1. out of the gross revenue for charges of management, &c.—It would be highly reasonable in a person unacquainted with the practice of the several departments, to suppose that some one common system should regulate each of them; and that, when an improvement had taken place in one of them, it would be adopted in the others. It would likewise, be reasonable in such a person to suppose, that the great extent of the expenditure of the country, would have occasioned an entire abandonment of the plan and regulations that were in use, when a few millions only were sufficient to defray every expense. Such a person, however, would find his suppositions by no means supported by facts, if he was to inquire into the detail of the system now in use. He would find in some instances, the power of conducting the expenditure vested in the hands of commissioners, in others, this power entirely left with a single individual; and even when improvements had been made, he would find them no where carried far enough to produce any degree of perfection in matters of regulation; nor adopted by some departments where the most wanting. He would, in short, discover that the system of management of the public expenditure, has been by no means altered in such a manner, as to render it adequate to meet the great alteration, that has taken place in the last thirty years in the amount of it; and he would be convinced, that a radical reformation is absolutely necessary, to secure the public from future violations of the law, and future speculation.—Is it not, Mr. Cobbett, the height of inconsistency to vest the expenditure of the navy in five Boards of Commissioners*, and to continue the whole direction of the expenditure of army and ordnance departments in two individuals? If it is wise to place the office of Lord High Admiral in commission, do not the same principles suggest the wisdom of placing the offices of Commander in Chief of the Army, and of Master General of the Ordnance in commissions†? If further, it is wise to have four

* The Admiralty, the Navy, the Transport, the Victualling, and the Sick and Hurt Boards.—† In the Ordnance there is a board composed of the Lieut. General, the Surveyor General, the Clerk of the Ordnance, the Storekeeper and the Clerk of the Deliveries; but, “the Master General

Boards of Commissioners, subordinate to the Board of Admiralty, for conducting the detail of the navy expenditure, why should not the office of Secretary at War, and the Office of Barrack Master General be placed in commission? The principle of confiding great trusts in the hands of commissioners, is either a good or a bad principle. If we look to experience, we shall find that the adoption of this principle in every department, concerned in the collection of the revenue, has been attended with the best of consequences. If we refer to the reasoning that may be had respecting it, we shall find that it is perfectly consistent with sound reason, to look with greater certainty to the correct fulfilment of a trust, when many are employed, than when confidence is placed in individuals. With therefore, the concurrent testimony of both experience and reason, to recommend the adoption of this principle in each department, that is necessary for managing the public expenditure; the sooner it is adopted, the greater will be the advantages which the public will derive from it. If then, the nature of the public expenses is such, that so great a proportion of them as amounts to thirty millions annually, cannot be brought before the House of Commons in such a manner, as to render it possible to fix the precise amount of the particulars of them; but, that this great sum must be left to the offices of the state, to be incurred and controlled according to the discretion of those who fill them; both common sense and daily experience point out the policy of providing the most effectual guards, for securing the public from irregularities and frauds. As however, the principles of this policy have not been acted upon; as no regular principles for incurring, examining, and paying the public expenses are pursued; nor as even, where the principle of acting by commissioners is followed, has, as the reports of the Commissioners of Naval Inquiry demonstrate, a proper system of checks been formed over the conduct of the commissioners, it must be a useful undertaking, even if it should fail of complete success, to point out any rational plan for so dividing and controlling the various duties of conducting the expenditure of the public money, that each duty may be rendered simple and easy in performance, and that each person employed to fulfil it may have no opportunity of be-

“can do any act, which can otherwise, if “he does not interpose, be done by the “Board.” (12 Rep. Com. Fin.) It is obvious, that the officers who compose this board, execute a power to which they ought to be subordinate.

traying his trust.—The great length of this letter obliges me to break off, and leave the statement of such a plan for a subsequent communication.—I am, Sir, &c.—*VERAX.*
May, 17, 1805.

ROMAN CATHOLIC SOLDIERS.

MR. CORBETT.—Until I had seen what turn the motions submitted to both Houses of Parliament, by Lord Grenville and Mr. Fox, on the petition of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, had taken, I did not think it necessary to trouble you, or the public through your Register, on a point which would probably have been discussed and remedied, had either House of Parliament gone into the proposed committees.—You may remember, Sir, that in the year 1791, an act passed, which is recorded in the statutes at large, under the 31 Geo. III. chap. 32, and is intitled: “An Act to relieve, upon Conditions, “and under Restrictions, the persons there- “in described, from certain Penalties and “Disabilities to which Papists, or persons “professing the Popish Religion, are by law “subject.”—This act provides (III) that no Roman Catholic, who shall have taken the oath appointed by the act, shall be prosecuted for not resorting to some Parish Church, &c. Nor can he (IV.) be prosecuted for being a papist; and then allows (V) public places of Roman Catholic worship, when certified to the quarter sessions. And, in order to oblige Roman Catholics to attend these places of worship the act proceeds thus:—IX. “Provided always, and “be it further enacted, That all the laws “made and provided for the frequenting of “divine service on the Lord’s day, com- “monly called *Sunday*, shall be still in “force, and executed against all persons “who shall offend against the said laws, un- “less such persons shall come to some con- “gregation or assembly of religious worship “permitted by this act, or by an act passed “in the first year of the reign of King Wil- “liam and Queen Mary, intitled, An Act “for exempting their Majesty’s Protestant “subjects, dissenting from the Church of “England, from the penalties of certain “Laws.”—And the Irish act passed 1793, or 33 Geo. III. chap. 21, runs thus: XI. “And be it enacted, That no Papist, or per- “son professing the Popish or Roman Ca- “tholic Religion, shall be liable or subject “to any penalty, for not attending Divine “Service on the Sabbath Day, called Sun- “day, in his or her Parish Church.”—From these premises every reader must infer, 1st. That the laws of this empire allow the Ro- man Catholic worship within these realms.

2dly, That they impose a penalty on Roman Catholics not resorting to their place of wor- ship on a Sunday. I now wish to call the serious attention of every reader to the fol- lowing extract from a letter, (dated 7th April, 1805) that I received from a deputy lieutenant and justice of the peace for the county of Kilkenny. “Nothing could give “me greater pleasure than your passing “some time here, when I could shew you “one of the finest circumstanced countries “perhaps in Europe, for becoming rich and “happy: but, unfortunately, the country “is peopled with *Papists!* By way of giving “some idea of the country, I will describe “to you the state of this parish. Last year “they thought proper, much against my “will, to appoint me one of the Deputy “Governors or Board of Lieutenancy of “this county (Kilkenny) to which they “have added the commission of the peace, “a very troublesome office. In my former “capacity I undertook to order a return of “this and the neighbouring parishes, and “in this parish I attended closely to the “correctness of the return under the de- “fence act. The parish contains 4,500 “Irish acres, its population consists of “2,460 of both sexes, and all ages, of which “sixteen only are Protestants, and all the “remainder *Papists.* Of those 2,460 there “are 640 men between 15 and 60 years of “age, capable of being called out. The “whole population of the county amounts “to about 139,800, of which the number “of all descriptions of religions except Pa- “pists, is ascertained to be 5,238 (above 26 “to 1.) Under the Army of Reserve Act, “this parish was required to furnish five “men, which, I procured and sent to quar- “ters in the course of a fortnight. The “grand objection to falling on, as it is “called, was religion, which I obviated by “reading our act of 1793 (see act xi. “above.) The five I sent from the parish “were Roman Catholics, as I believe the “entire of the reserve to be. When they “got to the regiment they were prohibited “from going to mass, and ordered to go to “Church, and this after they took the “bounty for general service, which at the “time I enlisted them, I advised them to “do. It is now impossible to get men to “enlist in any part of this country, for any “bounty, as the lower orders (from the “knowledge of this breach of faith having “reached them) look upon entering the “army equal to an apostacy from their re- “ligion. Surely a system of that kind “could not be entertained by men in their “senses, situated as the whole empire is at

"this moment. To reject the military assistance of so great, so athletic, and so patient a body of people," &c. &c.—What may be the sensations raised in the breast of my readers, I shall not pretend to describe; but, if every spark of patriotism be not extinct in their breasts, I hope that one and all will call loudly for an explanation of this bigotted despotism exercised over poor men, indeed, but who are generously exposing their lives against the most formidable, and at the same time, most artful of despots (for he has found means of setting every religious dispute at rest, in the short space of five years.) These poor men are willing to give their lives for their country. Their country, as I have shewn, give them the free exercise of their religion; and, nevertheless, they are deprived of that consolation which they look for, in a religion professed by their progenitors from the first moment that christianity was known in their island. To my own personal knowledge, poor soldiers have been refused the ministry of the priesthood, while on their death beds; at the same period, the jail was open to the priest, and the thief or murderer at Newgate, was allowed those consolations which the soldier was refused in his last moments.—This system, as you see, Sir, is now stopping the recruiting service, and though the penal laws drive me personally from those ranks in which my ancestors formerly fought, for they were at Cressy and Potiers, still I shall ever think it a duty to serve my country by whatever means I can. None, I believe, could be more effectual, at this moment, than to instigate an inquiry, whether any orders, so contrary to the spirit of the above acts, have been issued? If none have been issued, why are Roman Catholics forced to the Protestant Church against their will? And, in either case, whence is the power assumed.—How different the conduct in the Austrian service, where the Roman Catholic faces towards his church, the Protestant towards his; and, at the word march, each proceeds to his place of worship. In France before the revolution, there existed two military rewards, the Crosses of St. Lewis, and of merit; the first for the Catholics, the second for the Protestants. I am sorry to think, that this statement differs with assertions of men supposed to be conversant with foreign affairs. Can this ignorance be attributed to our insular situation. It is so that situation indeed, that the advantage of having preserved the celtic language in a greater state of purity, than any other part of Europe, has been attributed by the antiquary. But, to return, Sir, my object has been to call the attention of the public

to a subject, which, in my judgment, and I hope, after reading this statement, in their judgment, requires immediate redress. You are no stranger to the innumerable acts for augmenting our means of defence. Therefore, you will certainly second the views of one who wishes to put the public in possession of nothing but the truth, and the whole truth.—*ALETHEIA.*—May 16, 1805.

DOMESTIC OFFICIAL PAPERS.

PETITIONS AGAINST LORD MELVILLE.—

Petition of the Borough of St. Albans, presented to the House of Commons on the 10th of May, 1805, and entered in the Votes as follows:

A petition of the mayor, aldermen, recorder, freemen, and inhabitants, of the Borough of Saint Alban, in the County of Hertford, was presented to the House, and read; setting forth, that the petitioners beg leave to congratulate the House, and express their heartfelt satisfaction, at the resolutions which passed on the 8th and 10th of April last, respecting the Tenth Report of the Commissioners of Naval Inquiry, and pray the House to pursue such measures as they may think just for effectually exposing, and bringing to punishment, all public peculators and delinquents, and for securing in future the treasure of the nation from similar depredations; and although the petitioners most sincerely deplore the complicated difficulties of the present conjuncture, yet they confidently rely on the wisdom of Parliament for relief.

Petition of the County of Surrey, presented as above, on the 16th of May, 1805.

A petition of the gentlemen, clergy, and freeholders, of the County of Surrey, was presented to the House, and read; setting forth, that the petitioners beg leave to express their unfeigned gratitude to the House for the measures they have taken towards detecting, and bringing to justice, those servants of the Crown who have broken the law, violated their trust, and used the public money for purposes of private emolument and ambition, and they implore the House not to desist from the prosecution of those inquiries which they have so honourably and so successfully began; and they intreat the House to bear in mind how patiently the people of England have sustained the immense burthens imposed upon them, the sufferings they have endured, and are now enduring, the enormously advanced prices of the necessaries of life, and above all, their generous, unsuspecting confidence at all times in those in whose hands the earnings of their industry were deposited; and that, thankful as the petitioners are to the House

for having recorded upon their journals the flagrant breaches of trust committed by unfaithful servants, they beg leave most humbly to represent to the House the necessity of guarding against a repetition of similar frauds, peculations, and abuses; and that the petitioners, therefore, entreat the House to investigate thoroughly not only the remaining articles contained in the Tenth Report of the Commissioners of Naval Inquiry, but also the suspicious matters brought forward in their Eleventh Report, and likewise every other irregularity which may hereafter be discovered by any further reports of the said commissioners; and that they will also institute immediate and strict inquiries into the expenditure of every other branch of the executive government; and that, in the progress of these important investigations, which the expectations of the people require to be rigorously and impartially pursued, the petitioners are persuaded, that the House acting up to the spirit of their resolutions of the 8th and 10th of April, will follow no other counsels than those which shall be dictated by their own integrity and discernment; and they hope that the detection of men, who are now found to have been, for a series of years, in the constant habits of misapplying the public money, will warn the House not to rely too much upon the specious professions of their colleagues, for the punishment of offences, through which they have themselves derived a corrupt support to their own power: and that the petitioners trust, rather, the period is at length come at which the representatives of the people, returning to the examples and the maxims of former times, will shew themselves determined to pursue hereafter a system of vigilance and jealousy, instead of reposing an implicit and indiscriminate confidence in the advisers of the Crown.

Petition of the City of York, presented as aforesaid, on the 16th of May, 1805.

A petition of the inhabitants of the City of York, convened, pursuant to request, by the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, and assembled in the Guildhall of the said City, on Monday the 13th day of May, 1805, was presented to the House, and read; setting forth, that the petitioners feel the deepest gratitude to the House for its patriotic votes on the 8th and 10th days of April last, founded on the Tenth Report of the Commissioners of Naval Inquiry; the one declaring Lord Viscount Melville to be guilty of a gross violation of the laws, and a high breach of his public duty; and the other ordering such resolution to be laid at the foot of the Throne, the whole House attending;

the petitioners are convinced that no act of any branch of the legislature has ever been received with more satisfaction by the people of this country than the said votes; and they are further convinced that nothing can possibly be a greater disappointment to the people than any remission in the House of the vigorous and necessary efforts with which they have thus commenced the career of public justice; and that the faithful and dignified discharge of the powers vested in the Commissioners of Naval Inquiry, their indefatigable industry, their resolute perseverance, their unexampled fortitude, and their incorruptible integrity, have demanded and have obtained the admiration and applause of the whole nation; and a continuance at least, if not an extension of the powers vested in them, and also a general inquiry into the conduct of every other department of finance, are essentially requisite to the prosperity of the British Empire; and the petitioners anxiously request of the House, that whenever hereafter this subject may come before them, they will fix their attention on the obstructions to full inquiry, so evidently pointed out in the said Tenth Report of the Naval Commissioners; and they intreat the House that they will, in the institution of other inquiries into the public expenditure, take especial care that the power they shall delegate be equal to its object, both as referring to the facility of inquiry and to the integrity of those to whom inquiry shall be committed; for the petitioners submit to the House whether any thing short thereof will not be deemed illusive and unavailing, and rather contribute to the continuation than the prevention of future abuse and speculation; and that on all these matters the petitioners request the House steadily to pursue what they have with so much honour begun, and not to relax their efforts till guilt, wherever it exists, shall be pursued to detection, and till exemplary and deserved punishment shall have overtaken, as well those who have themselves been fraudulent, as those who have connived at fraud.

Petition of the County of Norfolk, presented, as aforesaid, on the 17th of May, 1805.

A petition of the gentlemen, clergy, and freeholders of the County of Norfolk, convened by the high sheriff of the said county, at the Castle of Norwich, in the Shirehouse there, on Tuesday the 14th day of May, 1805, was presented to the House, and read; setting forth, that the petitioners beg leave to express their gratitude to the House for the steps which they have already taken towards the detection and punishment of those servants of the Crown who have de-

fied the laws, broken their trust, and applied enormous sums of the public money to their own corrupt purposes of emolument and power; and that in the name of a loyal and suffering people, the petitioners implore the House not to relax in their exertions; they intreat them to consider how patiently the petitioners have seen millions added to millions of the national debt, the rapid advance in every article of consumption, their burthens encreasing, and their means of bearing them diminishing, in the just hope that while engaged in extensive wars what they contributed with cheerfulness would be applied with fidelity, and as the law expressly directed; and that faithful to their first duties, the House have recorded, by the resolutions of the 8th and 10th of April, that the people of England have been grossly wronged by Lord Melville; and the petitioners humbly represent to the House, the necessity of effectually protecting the nation against future depredations; and therefore praying the House, first, to investigate and sift to the bottom the remaining charges of abuse in the application of the public money, contained in the Tenth Report of the Commissioners of Naval Inquiry: secondly, to examine minutely into the nature of those irregularities brought to light in the Eleventh Report of the said Commissioners, and likewise whatever may appear culpable or suspicious in any of their future reports: thirdly, to institute immediate and rigorous inquiries into the expenditure of every other department of executive government; and that in performing these acts of necessary and expected justice, the petitioners are persuaded that the House will take no other guides than its own wisdom and resolution; and that, warned by the example of detected guilt, and awake to the frauds which have been practised upon their own facility, as well as upon the public purse, the House will perceive the necessity of resorting to those principles which prevailed in the better days of our constitution; and of acting upon a system of vigilance and jealousy in preference to one of blind and implicit confidence in ministers.

Petition of Hampshire agreed to at Winchester on the 16th of May, 1805, setting forth as follows:

That the votes of your honourable House, on the 8th and 10th days of April last, on the motions of Samuel Whitbread, Esq. founded upon the 10th Report of the Commissioners of Naval Inquiry, deserve the gratitude and confidence of your petitioners, and of the whole country.—That we do humbly request this honourable House

to proceed in the spirit of those votes in their future investigation of those flagrant abuses brought to light by the Reports of the Commissioners of Naval Inquiry.—That to the Commons in Parliament we look up with a confident hope and just expectation that they will not only not relax in their inquiries into all abuses and culpable irregularities in the management and expenditure of public money, but that they will also take especial care that the very heavy taxes levied upon the people, and hitherto cheerfully contributed by them, shall be wisely and frugally expended.

Petition of the Hertfordshire Freeholders, presented as above, on the 20th of May, 1805.

A petition of the freeholders of the County of Hertford, convened by the high sheriff at Hertford, on Saturday 18th May, 1805, and whose names are thereunto subscribed, was presented to the House, and read; setting forth, that the petitioners have received the votes of the House of the 8th and 10th days of April last, with a satisfaction as great as have been their astonishment, indignation, and sorrow, at the gross and flagrant system of negligence and speculation which has been disclosed by the Commissioners of Naval Inquiry; and, with a gratitude proportioned to the extensive security and important national advantages thence to be expected, the petitioners beg leave to state their firm conviction, that nothing can so much contribute to the happiness of the people, the success of the contest in which the nation is engaged, and the ultimate well-being of the country, as a system of economy planned with prudence, adhered to with firmness, and conducted, in its details, with diligence, caution, and integrity; impressed as they are with this conviction, the petitioners entreat the House to accept their grateful thanks for the inquiries which it has already instituted, to the further prosecution of the object above-mentioned they earnestly pray the attention of the House, and beseech them to pursue with effect that which they have begun with so much honour, and that they will institute and persevere in a general system of inquiry which shall be co-extensive with the abuses which may exist in the expenditure of the public money.

Petition of the Borough of Reading, presented as above, on the 20th of May, 1805.

A petition of several inhabitants of the Borough of Reading, in the County of Berks, was presented to the House, and

read; setting forth, that the petitioners beg leave to convey their sincere and hearty congratulations to the House on the votes of the 8th and 10th days of April last, respecting the Tenth Report of the Commissioners of Naval Inquiry; and they trust that the House will continue to scrutinize, with unceasing perseverance, the several reports that are or may be brought before them, and that they will bring forth to public view and contempt all persons, however distinguished by rank or office, who shall have been guilty of peculation, embezzlement, or misapplication of public property, and inflict on them such marks of disgrace, and such punishment, as will satisfy the expectations of an injured people, consistently with the wisdom and justice of the House.

SUMMARY OF POLITICS.

RUSSIA.—That “confidential intercourse,” which, at the beginning of the session of parliament, we were so confidently told, existed between this country and certain powers upon the Continent, particularly Russia, seems to have led to nothing further than an excuse for the raising of five millions of the supplies for the year. This, it is very likely, was all that the minister himself expected from it; and, the public will remember, that it is all that was anticipated by the Editor of the Register. Indeed, those who expected continental aid, during the present war, during a war undertaken, by the ministers, *for the purpose of retaining Malta*, and especially when that war came to be conducted by Mr. Pitt; those who, under such circumstances, expected efficient aid upon the continent, must have been something more than “nature’s fools.”

—It is now said, that the Emperor of Russia is about to tender Napoleon terms of peace. To send his ambassador to tender Napoleon terms of peace, *at Milan*; and, perhaps, to be present when Napoleon is crowned King of that country, to have a large share in settling the affairs of which Alexander claimed as his right, and the refusal, on the part of Napoleon, to admit such claim was the principal cause of the hostile language and attitude of the former! Napoleon will soon settle the affairs of Italy; and then there will be no further room for disagreement upon that head.—What delightful progress we have made in this war! From the “incapacity and imbecility” of the Addington administration nobody pretended to expect any thing good; but, there were many who expected wonderful feats from the vigorous proceedings of Messrs. Pitt and Dundas. What have they done as

to the Continent, where they were to inspire universal confidence? They have put in motion messengers and exchange brokers enough, and some few lazy blundering spies perhaps; but not a single soldier. Not a single ounce of powder have they caused to be burned; not a single sword have they made to move from its scabbard. The public will remember with what confidence the hired writers spoke of the great change which the names of Pitt and Dundas were to produce upon the Continent; and that same public must remember that, on our side, pains were not wanting to prevent them from being deceived. We not only declared our opinion, that no aid would be obtained from the Continent by the Pitt and Dundas administration; but we stated, at length, the reasons upon which that opinion was founded. Nevertheless, the promises of the ministers were, by but too many, relied on. There are always so many of those persons, who are connected with the press, entirely dependent upon the minister of the day, that it is by no means surprising to see the public led along from one false hope to another, when such hope is favourable to the duration of the minister’s power. Even now, at the moment when the fallacy of the promises made in the Autumn is become apparent, new promises are made, with as much confidence as ever. As to public opinion, therefore, it must be, with respect to foreign politics especially, left to events, and events, too, so glaring in their appearance, and so severe in their effects, as to set all the powers of palliation at defiance.—The Emperor of Russia, if he be really disposed to accommodate matters with the Emperor of the French, will hardly suffer the interests of England to stand in the way. It is possible, though not very likely, that Napoleon may propose an arrangement, in which England will be called upon to give up Malta to Russia. This is rather too much for Napoleon to consent to; but, if he were to consent to it, would Messrs. Pitt and Dundas refuse to give up that Island? That “outwork of our Empire in the East”? Would they refuse to give it up? They, who, in the words of the former, pledged themselves to “repress the ambition and to chastise the insolence of Buonaparte”? Good heavens! What empty sounds! what noise and nonsense has this nation been amused with! No: they would make no such refusal; and no one need be surprised, if, (supposing them still to be in power) after having given up Malta, and pledged the nation to pay the amount of the Spanish prizes, they were to come to parliament and *boast* of having made an ho-

nourable and permanent treaty of peace and amity between his Majesty and the Emperor Napoleon!

THE ENEMY'S FLEETS.—But, will Napoleon be inclined to make peace, at present? With Russia he may; but, not with England upon any terms not degrading beyond measure; because all the chances are now for him; and none against him, especially in the West Indies, if the combined fleets of France and Spain should, as is still imagined, be gone to that part of the world. At Jamaica, on the 16th of March, they had heard of the attack upon Dominica; a council of war had been held; great bustle was making to bring out the militia; and martial law was about to be declared. What resistance Jamaica would be able to make cannot be quite certain; but there is too much reason to fear, that, if the combined Toulon and Cadiz fleets are gone thither, that colony is in great danger of becoming French, not only for the present, but *for ever*. Once in possession of Jamaica, Napoleon, who would be at no loss to find a conveyance, in neutral vessels, for the produce of the island, would, though not so easily, find the means of conveying troops quite sufficient, and more than sufficient, to defend the possession against any force that we could spare to attempt the recapture of it; and, if he held it to the end of the war; or, rather, to the time when negotiations for peace should begin, is there any one who believes, that, with a ministry and a system such as ours, we should be able to obtain its restoration by treaty? Does any man believe, that Mr. Pitt, or the other premier, Lord Sidmouth, would persevere in the war for the sole purpose of recovering Jamaica; especially after that war had already cost, perhaps, a hundred or two of millions of pounds sterling? If this sort of statesmen, therefore, continue to conduct our affairs, and if the present system of finance be adhered to, it seems very probable, that, in a year or two hence, we shall wind up a war, in which Messrs. Pitt and Dundas promised to “repress the ambition and to chastise the insolence” of Buonaparté; this war, it appears very likely that we shall wind up with acknowledging this Buonaparté the Emperor of the French and King of Italy; with surrendering Malta, and with leaving the enemy in possession of Jamaica. —It is useless for people to be angry with one for giving opinions like this. Let the ministry be changed, and let the system be altered; and, if that is not done, let nobody complain of the consequences. “What!” said they only about three months ago, “turn out those vigilant, vigorous, wise, and upright statesmen,

“Messrs. Pitt and Dundas!” Some of these epithets may now, probably, be dropped; but, still the persons who made use of them hang on to the system, if not altogether so tenaciously to the men. Let them. Since nothing but suffering will open their eyes, let them hang on, till events come and force them from their hold. —It is amusing enough to observe how men of this description are operated upon. The West-India merchants and planters have had a meeting, within these few days, at which they entered into a resolution (which they have taken good care to publish) to make General Prevost a present of a piece of silver worth 300l. for his gallant conduct in defending Dominica. To the army under him they presented their *thanks*. This latter commodity we need not wonder that they part with so freely; but, I think it will be allowed, that they must have been terribly frightened before they came to a resolution to give away three hundred pounds to a general, and if that general accepts of the silver, there is no one need grudge it him. What have they to do with rewarding officers, and thanking armies? Who made them judges of the conduct of soldiers? How do they know what is proper to be done upon such occasions? Miserable is the state of things when knots of merchants and money jobbers become the judges and the rewarders of military merit; the dispensers of military honours. —It appears, that, in consequence of an application from the above-mentioned meeting, Lord Camden, one of the Secretaries of State, informed them, that he had received a dispatch from General Nugent, the Lieut. Governor of Jamaica, stating that every preparation was made for resisting the attack of the enemy, if that island should be his object. Whether this intelligence proved consolatory to the meeting we are not told; nor, indeed, is it much matter. It is for the inhabitants of Jamaica; it is for England, that we ought to feel upon this occasion; and not for those sworn merchants and those overgrown planters, who reside in England, and who have, for the far greater part, been greatly instrumental in producing the present dangers, by the support which they have given, and which even to this hour, they continue to give, to the power of the Pitts and Dundases. They know, that those men have always been hostile to the West Indies, and that the turn of their policy was to favour the East at the expense of the West; but, like true spaniels, the harder they have been kicked the more obedient and more fawning have they become. Constantly intent upon nothing but their immediate interests, they have not yielded, in

point of staunchness, to the band of gentlemen pensioners themselves; but, not less foolish than supple, they seem never to have perceived, that the very means which they employed to purchase the favour, or, rather, the forbearance, of the minister, enabled him to set them at defiance, till, at last, they had no course left but that of supplication. Verily, they have their reward! They have the Pitts and Dundases: much good may they do them! They have their wish: they are under the arch-angelic wings of the heaven-born minister: what more do they want? Their voices and purses have been liberally employed to exalt and maintain his power; to enable him to continue to rule us, the people of England. Secure in their numbers they have laughed at all the struggles we have made to extricate ourselves from the effects of his system. Let them, then, excuse us, if we break not our hearts in sorrow for their calamities: let them wonder, that we refrain from mocking now that fear is come upon them.—It may now, possibly, occur to the whole nation, that it is *entirely* owing to the *war with Spain*, a measure against which the opposition so strongly protested, that there is such a thing as a *combined* French and Spanish fleet in existence. It may now, possibly, be remembered, that we foretold, that the dollars; the dollars taken without a declaration of war; the dollars for which we sold the remnant of our reputation: it may now be remembered, that we foretold, that those dollars, the capture of which was ordered by the Pitts and Dundases, would, even if brought into the national Treasury, go but a very little way in defraying the expenses that would arise out of a war with Spain. Such lessons are useful; though it must always be matter of regret, when men are found insensible to every thing short of punishment.—These observations are made with a view of reminding the reader, that the cause of our misfortunes has not proceeded either from witchcraft or from the stars. The cause is clearly discernible in our own conduct; in our own selfishness, tameness, and folly: and, unless in that conduct there be a very great change, what reason have we to hope, that we shall escape the consequences? It is in ourselves that the remedy for all our evils lies. If we would but listen to the voice of reason; if we would but obey, in public matters, the dictates of our conscience, the affairs of the nation would soon be conducted in a manner that would rescue us from the shocking state of disgrace in which we now live. But, so wide has the system of corruption, aided by the system of paper-money, extended, that it is wonderful

that there is even a small portion of public spirit left. We may complain as we please; we may accuse and try and punish delinquents; but, until the *cause* be removed, we shall find no relief. To this cause we owe all our misfortunes: to this cause they may all easily be traced: and, it never can be too often repeated, that, to turn out the Pitts and Dundases without destroying their system would be perfectly useless for any other end than that of enabling their successors to delude the nation for two or three years longer. Who would have imagined, that we should so soon have seen the fleets of France and Spain masters of any part of the ocean? Yet, with a thousand ships of war in commission, and of those thousand one hundred and fifty of the line, we now appear to feel no resentment at the conduct of those who have left our colonies to be insulted and captured by the enemy. A people so tame as we are become; so dead to every feeling as to public matters, particularly where the honour of the nation is concerned, never yet long maintained their independence.

STIPENDIARY CURATES.—The bill now before parliament relative to the stipends of curates, who shall serve and reside in parishes where the incumbent is lawfully excused from residence, is intended principally to promote residence on the part of such curates; and, it appears to be well calculated to effect its purpose. The bill provides, that, in cases where the living exceeds in annual value 400*l.* a year, clear of all expenses, the Bishop of the diocese is, by this bill, authorised to assign to the resident curate a stipend not exceeding *one-fifth* of the annual value of the living, provided, however, that the said *one-fifth* shall not exceed 250*l.* a year; that where more than one curate is necessary, the Bishop may assign to them both or altogether a stipend amounting to *one-third* of the clear annual value of the living; that the Bishop shall have it in his power to direct where the curate or curates shall personally reside, and, if he pleases, he may direct the residence to be in the parsonage house, or, in lieu thereof, assign him 20*l.* a year for a place of residence to be paid by the incumbent. These are the principal regulations; and, though it will be seen, that the bill gives great discretionary powers to the Bishop, yet, it is to be hoped that they will be exercised with wisdom and justice, and, no one can deny, I think, that such powers must be lodged somewhere, or that the church will very soon fall under the daily-increasing influence of the sectaries, who are spreading over every part of the country, and whose pernicious progress can

be checked only by a vigilant clergy in the church, and, to be vigilant, they must *reside*. —The objection urged to this bill, that it was unconstitutional, as it would *place the property of one man at the disposal of another*, appears to me to have arisen from an erroneous idea of the *nature of that property* which consists of church benefices. The living of a clergyman seems to have been regarded as his *private property*; but, that it cannot be so, in the usual meaning of those words, must, I think, appear evident to every one, who, for a moment, looks back to the *origin* of that property. A church was built by some proprietor of the land, and the tithes of a certain district round the church were left by that proprietor to the clergyman who should perform divine service there. This, generally speaking, was the way in which parishes were formed; thus was this sort of property created; and, though the laws regulating its distribution have undergone great alterations, the nature of the property itself can never be changed. We do, indeed, call a living *private property*, and this appellation is countenanced by the fact of its being a freehold, and conferring the right of voting at elections for members of parliament; but, if we take but a moment to reflect, we always find the *living* inseparable from the *clerical duties* of the possessor of the living; that the possession is a *conditional* one; that the thing possessed cannot be, positively, either sold, or let, or lent, not even for the life of the possessor, no, nor for a single month. The *condition*, upon which a clergyman receives his living is, that he shall perform the duties attached to it, according to the ordinances of the church and the laws of the country; and, as by a disobedience of those ordinances and laws, he may forfeit the living altogether, it follows, of course, that a part of the income of that living may be justly applied to the causing of those duties to be performed, which he either does not or cannot perform himself, and for the performance of which, and that only, the living was given him. —To the same error as to the origin of church property is to be attributed much of the clamour against tithes. The possessors of the land, and more especially the immediate possessors, always speak of the tithe as of something which is *theirs*, and which the law unjustly takes from them to give to another person. But, by looking back to the origin of this sort of property, they would soon perceive that it is *not theirs*; that the tithe is a charge entailed upon their land; that they purchased or rented the land with a full knowledge of the existence of such charge; and that, therefore, to withhold any

part of that tithe from the clergyman is an act of fraud. They would further perceive (and I heartily wish every *poor* man in England could be made to perceive it), that they, the possessors and cultivators of the land, are by no means to be regarded as persons who pay the clergy; as persons who maintain the clergy; as persons to whom the clergy are under obligations. They would perceive, that what they render to the clergy, they have no right, either legal or moral, to withhold; that they confer no favour; that they give no gift; that the gift comes from those who founded the church and settled the perpetual charge upon the land; and, at this stage of the inquiry both those who grudge the tithes and those who regard livings as private property would perceive, that the gift was not only for the maintenance of the clergyman, but also for the support of religion, and this, not only for the sake of the owners and the renters, but also for the sake of the tillers of the land. In short, they would perceive, that the living of each parish, is a pious bequest from some one or more of our ancestors to all the people, but particularly to the *poor*, of that parish; which living is to be so disposed of and conferred as to insure to the people the due performance of religious duties in their church and parish. —This, though a mere glance at the subject, must, I should imagine, produce in the reader's mind such a train of reflection as will make him reject the principle, upon which chiefly the bill has been opposed. —It must, however, be confessed, that there is a palpable inconsistency in passing a law like this; a law to *produce residence*; while the practice of bestowing *pluralities* is every day becoming, in all the channels of preferment, more and more prevalent. We have seen above, whence church property arose, what is its nature, and what is its object; and, can we, then, behold the number of pluralities that exist, can we observe who the pluralists but too frequently are, without being amazed, almost stunned, at the sound of a law for the purpose of inducing to *residence*? —It has been said, out of doors, at least, that the *consequence* of the beneficed clergy will be diminished by this law, while the increase to the stipends of the curates will not raise them high enough in society to give them *any consequence at all*; so that, upon the whole, the clergy will loose consequence. If I thought so, I should disapprove of the bill. But, people very often lose their breath in dispute, for want of settling the meaning of the terms upon which they are disputing. What is meant by the *consequence* of the clergy? Is it their consequence in the pul-

pit, or in a ball room? It is certain, that misery, such as some curates are left in, is calculated to bring the clerical character into contempt; but, I can see no advantage that religion is to derive from that sort of consequence, which is to be produced by the incumbent's being enabled to spend a great deal of money, and that, too, observe, *away from his living*; while, on the other hand, I can conceive, that an addition to the curates' stipend will very usefully add to his consequence in the eyes of the people, amongst whom he is to officiate. But, I really am afraid, that this is not the species of consequence that is contemplated. There seems to be something beyond this. Something very like a wish to *spend* up to the tune of the 'squire, at least; and, if so, the case is desperate; for, the clergy never have been, they never will be, and they never ought to be, able so to spend. This is, besides, quite a new way of acquiring clerical consequence, which was formerly sought for rather by the road of humility, abstinence, and mortification. Without, however, entertaining any wish to drive the clergy back to primitive manners, while their flock, or rather their herd, are wallowing in the luxury of the day, I may venture to assert, that the only *useful* consequence for the clergy to maintain, or acquire, is to be maintained or acquired, by means very little connected with the possession of large incomes. They will easily perceive the *means* I allude to you; but, alas! it is so much pleasanter to acquire consequence by riding a fine horse, by lolling in a coach, by strutting at a ball, by melting away at a music meeting, by eating fricandoes, and by drinking of claret, that it would be presumption in the extreme to hope that my hint would not be treated with disdain.—There is one point more, on which it may not be unnecessary to say a word or two. The bill closes with declaring null and void all private agreements made in fraud of the bill. But, it appears to me, that nothing will ever effectually prevent such agreements, short of insisting upon a *record*, kept in some office to which the Bishop has easy access, of *all contracts* between incumbents and curates.

INDIA.—The recent dispatches from India, like all the other sets of dispatches from that quarter, make us regret, that our warriors there have not at their elbow wives like good Mrs. Baxter, who, as Swift tells us, often used to say to her husband: "Write less, my dear, and more to the purpose." The gentlemen, of whom I am venturing to speak, are, it must be allowed, *unusually* voluminous. What

they may be with the sword, I know not; but, when they once draw the pen, the case is past praying for. Then, again, they have a way of ringing changes upon their accounts of the same event. If there are five of them who have had something to do in the same battle, every one of them writes a long letter upon the subject, taking care so to vary the disposition of the parts, the manner, and the language, to say nothing about the *facts*, that any person, unacquainted with the circumstance, would suppose, that five battles had been won, and, of course, that each of these chiefs had been a victorious commander. To this cause, in part, it is, that the dispatches from India amount annually to three or four folio volumes, close print. We see them, till we are sick of the sight. The words "INDIA-HOUSE," at the top of a newspaper column drives the eye across the page in an instant.—Notwithstanding we had, but about two months before, seen a whole folio laid upon the table of the House of Commons, we were, about a fortnight ago, treated with half another folio through the columns of the newspapers. From this last set we learn, that there has been more wars with the natives of the country; more towns taken, more provinces over-run, and, doubtless, more plunder amassed. When I read of these exploits, my mind is always drawn off from the scene, by the reflection, that every battle won in India is a victory over the rights and liberties of Englishmen. How many hamlets, how many villages in England, smart, and how many more will yet smart, under the oppression of the oppressors of India!—The late proceedings, indeed the proceedings for many years back, have lately found an advocate in a person, whose name had not been pronounced in the political world, for several years past. Lord Wellesley will, doubtless, be delighted to hear, that the late Mr. David Scott, who, has been dead, as a Director, since the year 1799, is suddenly come to life again, and has taken up the cudgels in his lordship's defence. Or, perhaps, he was, like Falstaff, only down and out of breath. The true meaning of his present resurrection, in the form of a pamphlet, appears to be to identify or to assimilate himself and his associates with Lord Wellesley, and to make a *mixty marty* of Scott, Melville, and Wellesley, that they may all pass for birds of a feather, under the old, original firm of the house of David Scott and Company. Whenever Mr. Francis shall publish his late speech, as I trust he will do, we shall see whether Mr. David Scott, who says he did not hear it, has answered it or not. If he has, it must appear little less than mirac-

lous; considering that he was very sick and did not attend, and that his answer, or, as he calls it, his observations on the subject of the debate, is dated the next morning. —I shall reserve his political opinions concerning the late transactions in India for a future discussion; observing only that, if it be true, as he affirms and laments, that “the principles, which have regulated the conduct of the British Indian Government for the last seven years, are formally impeached,” such impeachment must be founded on the declared sense of the Legislature. The question is, whether schemes of conquest and extension of dominion be or be not repugnant to the wish, the honour, and the policy of this nation. The Legislature affirms. David Scott denies. The authorities are balanced. The parties are at issue. As to the allegation or admission stated in a pamphlet, attributed to Mr. Francis, “that the whole peninsula of India is now, in effect, laid under contribution to the power of Great Britain,” &c. the inference drawn from the fact is fair and obvious, to wit, that in a country, where an enemy in arms is not to be found (for no man ever thought of Holkar as a formidable power) the plea of unexpected wars could no longer be set up for absorbing the immense revenues, which ought now to be at our disposal. But as to the justice, or even the sound policy of those measures, by which we have possessed ourselves of the whole peninsula, or the means, by which that possession is to be maintained, the bare allegation of the fact proves nothing; much less does it prove that *applause* is due to the *counsels and conduct of those, to whom such events are to be attributed*. All we yet know of the effects of these measures is the devastation of India, a perpetual drain on England both of men and money, and the utter ruin of the East-India Company on one side, with the jealousy and hatred of all Europe on the other. On the financial part of the subject, the next India Budget will help to explain those ominous words of Lord Castlereagh, *the heavy pressure of the Marhatta war*, which, he says, was felt long before the war began. We shall then see what proportion the revenue bears not only to the debt, but, what is much more material, to the expenses. An estate, that barely pays its charges, will never pay its debts; or, if, after providing for charges and debts, it does not leave a surplus of profit to the proprietor, what is the advantage of holding such a possession? and much more, if the proprietor is perpetually called upon for supplies to that estate, from his other funds or revenues. —The last observation I shall

make on Mr. David Scott, is, that he does not state the Company's debt correctly. —He says, that in 1793, it amounted to 9,084,550*l*. —The act of 1793, states it to be 7,000,000*l*. precisely. By this stratagem he makes the accumulation of debt, in the ensuing ten years, less by 2,000,000*l*. than it actually was. He then says that, in 1804, it amounted to 10,869,223*l*. but that was the amount at which it stood on the first of April, 1803. What it amounted to in April 1804, neither he nor I know; but here the confusion of dates is palpable, and, whether intended or not, must have the effect of misleading the public. —But, I do not know why we should trouble ourselves about Mr. David Scott or Lord Castlereagh or the East-India Company. Nothing that we can say, or do, will retard, by the space of one hour, that explosion which awaits the whole of the East-India concern. Every part of the vast scheme of Messrs. Pitt and Dundas seems to have attained the point of its duration. Whichever way you look, you behold symptoms of approaching ruin. The whole seems to have been calculated to last twenty years, and no longer: as if they had said to one another, that, if they could but bear it out for that length of time, they would jump the life to come. —As connected with the administration of Indian affairs, upon which score so much blame is imputed to Lord Melville, it is but fair to notice whatever is said in his favour. Amongst the various testimonials, which have been presented to the House of Commons in behalf of his lordship, there is one, of which he does not seem to be quite so proud as he ought to be; or, at least, his friends have hitherto made no use of it. In point of competence, the evidence I allude to is unexceptionable. It comes from a person united to the noble lord by many sympathies; and certainly, from a perfect judge of the genuine merits of his character. It would be a pity that such a document should be lost in the mass of papers, perpetually printed for the use of the House of Commons, and never read by any body; and it seems to devolve on me, to rescue from oblivion the panegyric written by such a man as Sir Home Popham, on such a man as Lord Melville. This officer in defending his character as to charges for repairs of his ships produces, in favour of it, many authorities. Among the rest, he lays before the House of Commons a voluminous correspondence between himself and Lord Wellesley, of forty folio pages in small print, giving an account, very much in point, of his embassy to the Red Sea, and of his negotiations there, which no mortal in England ever heard of

before. From these letters a great deal of diplomatic knowledge may be collected, as well as other useful information; particularly how he was fleeced by the Arabians, whom he naturally considered as friends, but who appear to be such determined robbers, that they do not even spare one another. In page 278 of this valuable collection, we find the following instructive passage: "MR. DUNDAS, who has so ably and successfully presided over the administration of the Company's affairs for many years, and who has wrought conviction on every individual mind, not only in England but in Europe," (mark the discovery!) "how rich and important the object (India) is to Great Britain, has particularly recommended, that every accessible avenue to it should be watched with a most jealous eye; and I conceive it obvious, from the circumstances which gave rise to so pointed a recommendation, that the view of this *inimitable* statesman was directed to the Red Sea!"—In some senses, the ambassador appears to be full as *inimitable* as the statesman. Very few people are blest with such a faculty as they are, of expansion of words and compression of meaning; but, in other respects, their conduct, if not quite inimitable, is not, it will soon be perceived, a great way beyond the reach of imitation.

PROCEEDINGS AGAINST LORD MELVILLE.

—The report of the Select Committee has not yet been made to the House of Commons, and, therefore, it is impossible to say what may be the further measures which parliament will take with regard to the facts brought to light by the Tenth Report of the Naval Commissioners. There is, indeed, a story afloat respecting a proposition intended to be made by a friend of Lord Melville; but, the argument, by which such an act must be defended, if defended at all, would be so much like that, by which one of the personages in a celebrated drama endeavours to reconcile his daughter to his proceedings against the life of her husband; there would be something so intolerably base and loathsome in such an attempt to ward off the charge of being an accomplice, that the thing is not to be believed, till seen: till we have the *proof* before us, we have no right to suppose any human being capable of such an act.—Some of my readers appear to have understood, that Lord Henry Petty, in consequence of the death of his father, has postponed, till the next session of parliament, his motion relative to the *places* and *grants* to Lord Melville. It will be remembered, that that person is still in the enjoyment of great emoluments under the crown, that is to say, from the purse of the nation.

When Mr. Pitt announced to the House of Commons that his Majesty was about to strike Lord Melville from the list of his Privy Councillors, it was asked, whether Lord Melville did not still hold some places under the crown; to which Mr. Pitt answered; "none but *for life*;" that is, to say, none that could be taken from him. This assertion is denied; and, by a reference to p. 702 and 719, I think, the reader will find wherewith to make him hesitate, before he refuses to concur in such denial. To me, it clearly appears, that, for the reasons there stated, Lord Melville's place of Keeper of the Privy Seal of Scotland cannot have been legally granted for life; if not legally granted, it cannot be legally held; if not legally held for life, it may, of course, be taken away; and, that, if it can be legally taken away, it *ought* to be taken away, few persons will, I imagine, attempt to deny.—In order to throw further light upon this subject, which I cannot help considering as a very important one, I shall here give a brief history of these Scotch Offices, whence it will appear, that Lord Melville, the generous Lord Melville, the man so *careless of wealth*, having obtained a *reversion* of his office to his son, *resigned* that office to take another, and having taken possession of that other, then obtained, by a new grant, the *reversion to himself* of the office which he had resigned to his son!—But, let us proceed chronologically.—At the Union, the Office of Chancellor, in Scotland, was abolished, and a Lord Keeper of the Great Seal was appointed with a salary of 3000*l.* per annum, to execute the duties of the office. These offices *have invariably been held during the pleasure of the Crown*. The present Lord Keeper is the Duke of Gordon. The date of his commission 11th July, 1794.—The Office of LORD PRIVY SEAL of Scotland was instituted by James I. of Scotland, 1494; and has been constantly granted *during the pleasure of the Crown*. In 1763 the Honourable Stuart Mackenzie, was appointed Lord Privy Seal. He was turned out in 1765, by the Rockingham administration, but was reinstated by the Duke of Grafton, 28th Aug., 1766; and ten years afterwards, on the 5th May, 1776, he had a grant of this office *for life*. This was the first time such a grant had been made; and, so doubtful was Mr. Mackenzie of the *legality* of the grant, that he got a writ of Privy Seal for 3000*l.* per annum, in case he should ever be turned out of the office.—Lord Melville was appointed *for life*, 27th May, 1800, of which we shall see more by-and-by.—The office of SECRETARY OF STATE for Scotland, was instituted in the

year 1380; and was abolished in 1746. The duties of this office, which could not be performed in the English departments, was committed to the charge of a new officer called *KEEPER OF HIS MAJESTY'S SIGNET*. Both these offices have *invariably been conferred during the pleasure of the Crown only*.—On the 3d May, 1777, a joint commission was made to Lord Melville and Andrew Stuart, “*et hoc solum modo durante bene placito nostro*.” By this commission the appointment of sheriff's clerks *was not attached* to this office. On the 23d June, 1779, a commission was granted to Lord Melville *solely* in the same terms as to the duration of the office, but *including* the nominations of sheriff's clerks, of the present manner of *disposing* of whose offices the parliament will, doubtless, soon be duly informed. On the 31st July, 1782, a commission was granted to Mr. Dundas *for life*.—On the 21st August, 1792, a right of *reversion* was granted to R. Dundas Saunders, son of Henry Dundas, to take place upon the death, resignation or *forfeiture* of his father.—On the 26th May, 1800, Lord Melville resigned the office of Keeper of the Signet, and was the next day appointed *LORD PRIVY SEAL*. These two offices were instituted to be a *check* upon each other (for the safety and protection of the subject) as to those deeds which must pass both seals. They have, therefore, always been held by *different persons*, and the necessity of this is fully established by Lord Melville's *openly* resigning the Signet the day before he got the Privy Seal. But, notwithstanding this, contemplating the possible chance of his *son's death* happening before his own, he, on the 12th of June, 1800, procured a new grant of the *reversion* of the office of Keeper of his Majesty's Signet, in case his son should die before him. So that, not only are those two offices (which from their institution, down to the present time, have never been granted *but during pleasure*) given away during the *life of two persons*; but those two offices, which were established, for the security of the subject, to be a *check* on each other, may possibly, be joined in one person, and that person Lord Viscount Melville, a man censured by the Commons and disgraced by the King for being guilty of a gross violation of the laws and a high breach of duty!—Yet, even here we come not at a full view of this scene of profligacy on the one part and rapacity on the other; for, on the 30th of July, 1803 (having previously been created a *peer*) Lord Melville obtained for his wife, for 19 years certain, or, for her life, a lease of certain public revenues. These revenues are, at

present, worth about 400*l.* a year; after the death of one Crawford, they will, (as appears by the account now before parliament) be worth to her upwards of 1,000*l.* a year; and, the yearly *rent* which she is to pay to the public, is, less than *six pounds*! Besides which, the lease gave her the arrears of the said revenue, which she immediately pocketed to the amount of 3,583*l.*, without paying the public, on that account, a single farthing. This excellent bargain was made for us, while Mr. Henry Addington (now also a peer) was our national steward. The lease was signed by him, by Lord G. Thynne, and by Mr. N. Bond, as Lords of the Treasury; and it is by no means unamusing to observe, that the transaction was nearly co-eval with the prosecution of the *Tinman*!—The next year Mr. Pitt and Lord Melville again became ministers. They took possession of their offices in the month of May last. On the 31st of July, a warrant was obtained from the King, granting to Lord Melville an *addition* of 1,500*l.* a year to his salary as Lord Privy Seal of Scotland, which salary was already 3,000*l.* a year!... But, why do I exclaim? One ought to laugh at seeing them scourge a people, from whose baseness alone they derive the power of scourging. * *ad nos illi non est aliud*

* The documents, relating to these transactions, ought to be in every one's hands; therefore I insert them here at full length, beginning with the *Lease* to Lady Melville.

GEORGE R.—Our Sovereign Lord, with the special advice and consent of the Lord Chief Baron and other Barons of His Majesty's Court of Exchequer in that part of Great Britain called Scotland, ordains a Letter of Tack to be made and passed under the seal of the said Court of Exchequer setting, and in tack and assedation letting, like as His Majesty by these presents, with advice and consent foresaid seits, and in tack and assedation lets to John Hope, Esquire, major general in our army, Charles Hope and Alexander Hope, Esquire, colonels in our army, and Robert Dundas, of Melville, Esquires, and the survivor of them or his assigns, in trust nevertheless for Jane Viscountess of Melville, and her heirs and assigns, all and sundry the rents, feu-mills, farms, profits, and duties due and payable to us forth of the lands and lordships of Fife and Strathern, and all lands, baronies, and others thereunto belonging, and that for the space of nineteen full and complete years and crops from and after the term of Whitsunday 1803, and thereafter during all the days of the life of the said Jane Viscountess of Melville, to be enjoyed, and possessed by them during the said space, with full power to the said John Hope, Charles Hope, Alexander Hope, and Robert Dundas, and the survivor of them; and their or his fore-saids as trustees or trustee fore-said, or factors, or chamberlains in their name, at the term of Whitsunday yearly, to ask, crave, collect, receive and intromit with the said rents, feu-mills, farms, profits, and duties due and payable out of the said lands and lordships of Fife and Strathern, and all lands, baronies, and others thereunto belonging, from all and

and sundry the heritors, conjunct fiars, life renters, tacksmen, tenants, and other possessors liable in payment of the same, and for that effect to use all legal execution by pointing of the ground or otherwise, as accords conform to the law and practice of Scotland, and to grant acquittances, receipts, and discharges thereof, which shall be sufficient to the receivers: And his Majesty by these presents do also give, grant, and assign to the said John Hope, Charles Hope, Alexander Hope, and Robert Dundas, and the survivor of them, and their or his foresaids as trustees or trustee foresaid, the arrears of the said rents, feu-maills, farms, profits and duties due and accounted for by the said heritors, conjunct fiars, life renters, tacksmen, tenants, and other possessors, or by his Majesty's Chamberlain of the said lands and lordships of Fife and Strathern, and all lands, baronies, and others thereunto belonging, at and preceding the said term of Whitsunday 1803: And his Majesty wills and requires the Barons of his Majesty's said Court of Exchequer in Scotland, now and for the time being, to grant, direct, and issue forth all precepts, warrants, and executorial, from time to time at the instance of the said John Hope, Charles Hope, Alexander Hope, and Robert Dundas, and the survivor of them, and their or his foresaids, against the heritors, conjunct fiars, life renters, tacksmen, tenants, and other possessors of the said lands and lordships liable in payment of the rents, feu-maills, farms, profits, and duties aforesaid, to make payment of the same accordingly; for the which tack and assedation the said John Hope, Charles Hope, Alexander Hope, and Robert Dundas, and the survivor of them, as trustee or trustees foresaid, shall be holden and obliged to make payment to his Majesty and his royal successors, in name of tack duty, the sum of five pounds thirteen-shillings and four pence sterling yearly during the continuance of the said tack, beginning the first year's payment thereof at the term of Whitsunday 1804, for the crop and year immediately preceding, and so forth, to continue thereafter at the said term yearly, ay and until the issue and expiry of the said tack. And His Majesty, considering the good and faithful services of John Crawford, Esquire, his Majesty's chamberlain for the said lands and lordships of Fife and Strathern, and of all lands, baronies, and others thereunto belonging, is graciously pleased, as a mark of his royal grace and favour, to continue the yearly salary or pension of six hundred pounds formerly enjoyed by him as chamberlain aforesaid, during his life: therefore His Majesty do by these presents direct and require the said John Hope, Charles Hope, Alexander Hope, and Robert Dundas, and the survivor of them, and their or his foresaids, to pay to the said John Crawford, or to his assigns, the said yearly sum of six hundred pounds out of the first and readiest of the said rents, feu-farm, profits, and duties aforesaid, hereby set in lease, and to report the receipt and discharges in our Remembrancer's Office in the said Court of Exchequer on or before the first day of July in each year during the currency of this tack, if the said John Crawford shall so long live, of the payment of the sum or sums that may have fallen due of the said salary or pension of six hundred pounds directed to be paid to him as aforesaid, for the year ending at the term of Whitsunday preceding the said first day of July, under which condition this tack is granted, and no otherwise: and the said John Hope, Charles Hope, and Alexander Hope, and Robert Dundas, and

the Survivor of them, and their or his foresaids, being always obliged to give security to the good liking of the said barons for the regular payment of the said tack duty: and his Majesty ordains that the said tack to be further extended, with all clauses needful; and for so doing this shall be a sufficient warrant. Given at our Court at Saint James's this 30th day of July, 1803, in the 43d year of our reign. —By his Majesty's command, (Signed) HENRY ADDINGTON, G. THYNNE, N. BOND.

GEORGE R. —*Trusty and well-beloved*, we greet you well. Whereas we are graciously pleased, for divers good causes and considerations us hereunto moving, to grant and allow unto our *right trusty* and well-beloved councillor Henry Lord Viscount Melville, Keeper of Our Privy Seal of Scotland, one annuity or yearly salary of one thousand five hundred pounds, over and above the yearly fee or salary of three thousand pounds made payable to him by virtue of our letters of Privy Seal of date the 10th of July 1800, referring to the letters patent by which he is constituted Keeper of the said Seal: and our pleasure is, that the said annuity or yearly sum of one thousand five hundred pounds so granted and allowed by us as aforesaid, shall commence and be accounted payable to the said Henry Lord Viscount Melville from the 5th day of July instant, and shall be paid to the said Henry Lord Melville, or to his assigns, during his continuance in the said Office of Keeper of Our said Privy Seal, quarterly, at the four most usual days of payment in the year, by even and equal portions; but our royal intention is, that the said additional salary should be payable only as long as the said Vsscount Melville shall continue to hold the Office of Keeper of Our Privy Seal, and not be continued to his successor in that office: our will and pleasure is, and we do hereby direct, authorize, and command you to issue your warrants to the Receiver General of our land rents and casualties, authorizing and requiring him to pay unto the said Henry Viscount Melville, or to his assigns, the said sum of one thousand five hundred pounds a year, to commence from the 5th July 1804, and to be payable and paid to him, or to his assigns, during his continuance in the said Office of Keeper of Our said Privy Seal, quarterly, at the four most usual days of payment in the year accordingly; but our further will and pleasure is, that the said additional salary of one thousand five hundred pounds a year shall be payable only as long as the said Henry Viscount Melville shall continue to hold the said Office of Keeper of Our Privy Seal in Scotland, and not to be continued to his successor in that office: and we do hereby charge and command you to cause the said additional annuity or yearly sum of one thousand five hundred pounds, and all payments thereupon, as they shall from time to time become due and payable, to be inserted on the quarterly establishments or lists of payments of our civil affairs there, so as the sums to be inserted therein may be allowed and paid from time to time in like manner as other the salaries or allowanees on the same lists shall from time to time be paid; and for so doing this shall be not only to you, but to all others herein-concerned, a sufficient warrant. Given, &c. the 31st day of July 1804, in the 44th year of our reign. —By His Majesty's command, (Signed) W. PITT, C. LONG, LOVATINE. —*To the Barons of the Exchequer in Scotland.*